



**United States Department of the Interior  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Fort Matanzas National Monument  
8635 A1A South  
St. Augustine, FL 32080**



**Monthly Resource Management Update  
January 3, 2011**

**Anastasia Island Beach Mouse Survey**

In partnership with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FFWCC), park staff implemented an Anastasia Island beach mouse (AIBM) survey in December 2010. The survey will continue for one year and will compliment similar studies being undertaken by St. Johns County and Anastasia State Park. Fort Matanzas is known for being one of two remaining strongholds for the federally endangered AIBM (*Peromyscus polionotus*), the other being Anastasia SP. However, no monitoring of the park's population has occurred since at least 2007.

The current survey will provide data on presence/absence and distribution of the mice. To obtain this information, NPS and FFWCC biologists distributed thirty plastic tracking tubes throughout the park's dune ecosystem on Anastasia Island. The tracking tubes contain an inked pad on one end, bait (sunflower seeds) on the other, and a strip of white paper in between. When the mice enter the tube on the open end, they must traverse the ink pad and the paper strip in order to get to the food. When staff members check the tubes in a month's time, those that have been visited by AIBM will have the tell-tale tracks of the mice preserved like fingerprints on a blotter. (AIBM tracks are distinctive due to their relatively small size.)

If the study confirms the continued presence of the AIBM at Fort Matanzas, it will also give managers information regarding where in the park the AIBM resides. This information can be used in determining what habitat is particularly valuable to the AIBM and in need of strict preservation as the park implements its General Management Plan in the upcoming years.

[NATURE NOTE: The AIBM is restricted to coastal sand dune habitat. They live and nest in burrows excavated into the sand. Their food sources are insects and plant seeds, particularly sea oats, which grow extensively in the dunes.]

**Invasive Plant Survey**

Late in December Fort Matanzas National Monument was visited by two members of the NPS Florida/Caribbean Exotic Plant Management Team (EPMT) based out of Everglades National Park. The purpose of their visit was to assist park managers with a formal and comprehensive survey targeting invasive exotic plants growing within the boundaries of Fort Matanzas. (Invasive exotic plants are species that arrived in the area through other than natural means, and they show an ability to out-compete and displace native plant species over large areas.)

The most exciting result of the survey was the inability to find any remaining cogongrass in the park. This highly invasive plant had been identified and treated on the northern section of Rattlesnake Island in years past. Re-infestation by seeds arriving from outside the park is always a possibility, so park managers will continue to monitor for cogongrass indefinitely.

Three Brazilian pepper saplings and many small sprouts were discovered in the interior of Rattlesnake Island adjacent to one of the old drainage canals. All of these plants were removed and this area will also be monitored for re-growth. Most of the other exotics were found in the developed areas of the park. Species treated included Chinese box orange, camphor tree, lantana, sword fern, and asparagus fern.